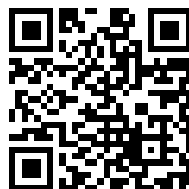

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SYLVESTER

SPRING'S DÉBUT

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SPRING'S DÉBUT.

A Town Idyll

IN TWO CENTURIES OF CONTINUOUS RHYME,

BY

J. J. SYLVESTER, F. R. S.,

Author of the Laws of Verse.



OPERA ac VERBA.

Printed for Private Circulation only.

*

SPRING'S DÉBUT.

SCENE:—Charles Street, West side near Saratoga.
On the sidewalks Gentlemen hurrying late to their
offices, Darkies, Ladies shopping, or coming out from
hearing Mr. Moody. Bright sun visible overhead.

Time:—March 1st. Sun one hour and a half
from the meridian.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ:

Interlocutors:—POET — ECHO — ROBIN.

Mutes:—Two Ladies, seemingly sisters, a little
in advance of the speakers, the younger
one of the two with her head slightly
turned round after having a moment
previously exchanged a round of light
chaff with Robin.

POET:

Who is she so blithe of mien
Airy nymph ~~of~~ Charles Street seen,¹
Sight ~~propitious~~ *emulative* to "sair 'een,"
Light as elves that trip the green
Thread deep dell or leafy dene,
Led by Oberon's faerie Queen,
Fresh as dew-drenched Jessamin,
Or on Pennington's storied screen,²
Or where Tait paints cattle in³

¹ Charles Street is the Bond Street, the Eternal Street of elegance and fashion, of Baltimore. In America the more picturesque form of expression "on the street" is used where in England we should say "in the street." *On* conveys the idea of an unenclosed space.

² Mr. Harper Pennington at the age of 18 painted on a screen for Miss Mary Garrett a Derby Day of Cupids mounted on Dragon-flies, which was exhibited at the late art loan exhibition in Baltimore where it attracted great and deserved admiration.

³ Mr. J. R. Tait, also of Baltimore, is a painter of cattle pieces and landscapes and bids fair to take rank some day as the American Troyon. I own a small piece of his (Cattle and Sunset) where the receding tones of the suffused light in.

9-27-55 Hand

RECAP

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10 That upon the life-like scene
 Tempt to stroke their silken skin,
 Or burnt in on Kaolin
 Milkmaid with her pannikin?
 Chique of Thebes' shawled Figurine,
 Poise of *Wien's* winged ballerin,
 Eye to abash an Ezzelin,⁴
 Such to *Moody* to have been!⁵

ROBIN :

 Were't so, all the church within
 Song of her should learn to hymn

the background imitate the effect of music dying away in the distance. Poe, Woodville, Owens, Jefferson and Whistler, were all born in Baltimore, more distinguished perhaps as the hot-bed than as the feeding ground of genius.

⁴ Fanny Ellsler and Ezzelin "*il tiranno*."

⁵ Mr. Moody has been giving two or three discourses daily during the last few months in Baltimore, where he designed to pass the winter for the sake of getting rest. This good and gifted man was wont to call the Penitentiary, where he gave comfort and hope to the outcasts of society, his parish church.

20 Whose voice hits the happy mean
Moving laughter foe to spleen
Not too low pitched nor too keen
And with pretty dimpled chin
To the bright-eyed seraphs kin
Whom to love not were pure sin.

POET :

Fine as point-lace or Mechlin,
Circe — but more feminine,
Pamela artless genuine,
Like loved child of Cymbelin'
30 Sainted sweet-souled Imogen,
Not more lively dear Nell Gwynne,
Dreamier, nocturne of Chopin
Swan-song of weird Lohengrin,
Calmer, aureoled Capuchin
Niched beneath stone baldaquin,
Loved of the Dryads Evelyn,⁶

⁶ John Evelyn 1620–1705, the friend of Pepys, author of
“*Sylva*, a discourse on forest trees.” Maturin (C. R.) is

Daintier, touch of Maturin,
 Purer, Rill of tears, Undine
 Shedde to undoe eache staine of sinne,
 40 Prouder self-ruled, Catherine ⁷
 Ere rose might of Mazarin
 Or who broke to rein Berlin
 High Autocrator Tzarín, ⁸
 Pious as Evangeline:

ROBIN :

Lithe of limb as Harlequin
 Neat as feathery back-hair pin
 (Fires me, its mere mentioning; ⁹
 Man-trap, cunningly laid ginn,
 Spring-gun, ambushed culverin,
 50 Toy, child Love delights so in

the Irish novelist, author of *Melmoth the Wanderer* and the
 tragedy of *Bertram*.

⁷ Catherine de Medicis.

⁸ Empress Elizabeth of Russia.

⁹ When they survey with Christian eyes or Heathen
 In a new face "the ugliest creature breathing."

D. J., Canto C, xxxvii.

And on't as on steel or whin¹⁰
Whets his own dulled javelin)¹¹
Not embonpoint nor too thin
Who hath wit more worth than "tin,"
Yellow seal from sawdust bin¹²

¹⁰ My own knowledge of the use of the word "whin" (root of whinstone) is imperfect, but a friend assures me that he has heard it used at American dinner tables as synonymous with a knife-sharpener.

¹¹ in comptum Lacænæ

More comas religata nodum.

Hor. II, xi, 23-24.

Vide Postscript, p. 29.

¹² I was in doubt about the propriety of using *sawdust* as an adjective when providentially my eye alighted on the following passage in 'The World, a Journal for Men and Women:'

"No impartial judge will be found to maintain that the musician of the future is not of more importance to humanity than a young lady dressed in tights and spangles who rides a bare-backed horse in a sawdust ring." *Sawdust track*, I have since found in common use in American journals. Substantives are ruthlessly impressed into service and made to do duty as adjectives, participles and verbs in the American branch of the Anglo-Saxon tongue. I remember reading in a number of the New York Herald which chronicled the transit of a theatrical company over

Where Arachne's used to spin,
 Chablis, Sauterne, Chambertin,
 Rubies, topaz, tourmalin
 Plucked like buds by Ala-ed-Din ¹³
 60 Quips and cranks of mimic Quin ¹⁴
 Or of ^{beauty's} trickling tears a hin, ¹⁵
 With its spell all hearts to win.

the breadth of the continent in three days, that "the engine slackened speed and *Tecumseh-'d*" at a day and hour therein stated.

¹³ Ala-ed-Din commonly written Aladdin means *glory of the faith*.

¹⁴ The comic actor, rival of Garrick, and tutor in elocution to George III when Prince of Wales, celebrated for his impersonation of Falstaff. "I taught that boy to speak," said he when he heard George III deliver his famous speech from the throne: "I glory in being born a Briton." Pity he had not been born at Herrenhausen! there would then in all probability have been no war of American Independence. "I won't whistle Falstaff to please anybody," was Quin's indignant reply when at the age of 50 (Doctor Volcks were not in those days) he had lost two of his front teeth.

¹⁵ The author is indebted for the suggestion of the final word in this line (the only borrowed rhyme he believes, barring one or two of Mr. Tait's) to the Autocrat of the Breakfast Table. He has never consulted or even had in

POET:

Say! or shriek to drown this din;
Who is she such praise doth win?
Lurking Echo whispers

Winn

Whose pale cheek, transparent skin
(Blush of May-day dawn dashed in)
Sunnier than ripe nectarine,
Might Millais called o'er to li'n
70 Famed from Paris to Pekin
Heir to Guido and Van-Ryn
Scaling heights ne'er dreamed Poussin ¹⁶

his possession or held in his hand a rhyming dictionary, which it is preposterous to suppose could be of any use in the invention of rhymes running over centuries of (let no ungentle reader be tempted to interpolate "damnable") iteration.

¹⁶ Millais! to prove this boast is sound and sober

Strike Envy dumb and freeze with Chill October.

As I saw a French lady ~~nearly~~ struck dumb with amazement and admiration standing before this picture at the French Exposition in 1878. *Penitus obstupuit* (to use

Bays uncustomary win?

Echo spells out

Mary Winn¹⁷

ROBIN:

Who not lightly taken in,
Valuing not vain fops one pin
That of *salons* the "fleur fine"
In *saloons* quaff beer and gin,¹⁸

pretty nearly Euler's language as quoted by Gauss in his preface to Eisenstein's collected works) *quum hoc illæ manifestaretur*.

¹⁷ The real name of the lady with whom the Author has not the honor of being personally acquainted, but who belongs to one of the best known families in Baltimore. Robin is Mr. Robert Garrett, (heir to the glories of the Baltimore and Ohio Line, its Steamships, Docks and stupendous Elevators) in whose company the *rencontre* took place which gave rise to this effusion, evolved out of an improvised epigram which, as he wended his way home that morning, formed itself in the Author's mind, intoxicated with the bright sun shining over head, the balmy air, the song of the birds and the new-come-out virgin Spring just beginning to peep over Old Father Winter's reverend shoulder.

¹⁸ Saloon is American for a Bar-room *unattached*; the same kind of thing hardly exists in England.

(Hebe turned to Kellnerin!)

80 Whose rude sires bade horn and tin
Foam with wort and metheglin,
Quick discerning as Corinne
Modern-antique heroine
Laurelled Muse Capitoline,¹⁹
Or vowed adept of Beth-din²⁰
Deaf to voice of Muezzin,
Monica's peerless Augustin²¹
Massa's breveted Bernardin,²²

¹⁹ The antient Corinna more than once carried off the prize for poetry from Pindar of whom she was a fellow pupil and occasionally the judicious Mentor whose counsels and criticisms in the art they pursued in common he had the sense to profit by. Me. de Stael's Corinna was crowned as the Classic Muse in the Capitol.

²⁰ Beth-din is a rabbinical theological seminary.

²¹ Whose *de Civitate Dei* I remember used to be the favorite reading of a famous Cambridge Mathematician when residing in days gone by in the "Stone Buildings" of stony Themis.

²² Saint Bernardin of Massa Carara, sainted six years after his death in 1450 by Nicholas V, may be said to have taken brevet rank in the celestial hierarchy, as under the existing regulations 100 years are bound to elapse between beatification and sanctification.

Or new Timon, Cormenin—²³

90 False knight from true paladin

Light, from passed through Pyx, Zecchin' ²⁴

Grain from husk where's nought within,

Seeks to know as kin seeks kin

And twin sister turns to twin,

Noblest minds—and knowing win.

Echo laughs out

Win-nowing Winn

²³ The celebrated political and satirical writer Vicompte Louis Marie de Cormenin always wrote under the name of Timon. His "Livre d'Orateurs" I remember making a sensation in England (or at all events in the columns of the Times) when it first appeared. By the causticity of his pen he sealed against himself the doors of the Academy. Not more indispensable is snuff to a Highlander than incense to the assembly of the Immortals.

²⁴ Two coins in the English Mint are taken from the bag before its contents are issued to the public, one to be assayed in the Mint, the other sealed up and put into a chest called the Pyx a trial of which (called Trial of the Pyx) takes place about once in three years before experts summoned by the Lord Chancellor for the purpose.

POET:

When divorced from home and kin
Exile like Ledru-Rollin
Bann'd by Jesuit and Chauvin,
100 (Honest rough-hewn Jacobin)
By thy torn stone ribs Penryn!²⁵
Writ in fame's gold book East-Lynne,
Belched from the depths, steep Santorin,²⁶
Rehōboth where the glittering fin²⁷
Edged, like ruthless Guillotin,²⁸
(Pirate flag, that hoists *requin*)

²⁵ Close to Penryn are moors which are quarried for granite.

²⁶ Santorin, in the Greek Archipelago, is of volcanic origin. It has been ruptured within the historical period, and a new islet formed in its vicinity in quite recent times.

²⁷ Rehōboth is the youngest American watering place on the coast of Delaware opposite Cape May. The Methodist community holds yearly meetings there and in their well ordered camp, where no non-conformists are tolerated, a simultaneous cleansing goes on of body and soul. Sharks are very frequently seen outside the surf.

²⁸ Imagine a shark to take a plunge head foremost and its dorsal fin will represent precisely the shape and action of the blade of the guillotine.

Glides midst swarming protein,²⁹
 Marshes and wet sands of Glynn³⁰
 Hunting grounds of Algonquin,
 110 Lake, last hope of Guatemozin³¹
 Hills where hapless Jocelyn³²
 Felt the might of Noor ed-Din,
 Hammering hand of Saladin,³³

²⁹ Jelly fish, sea nettles, etc., are found in great abundance and of enormous size in the sea or thrown up on the beach by the tide at Rehoboth.

³⁰ Glynn is a sort of Lido, on the coast of Georgia. Mr. Lanier, the author of *Corn* and the *Centennial Ode*, the apostle of "phonetic syzygy" and admittedly the finest flute player in the United States, has written a poem which has been much admired, called "The Marshes of Glynn," drawn from his impressions on the spot, where like Byron at Venice he was used to take long solitary rides, or accompanied only by his Muse, up and down on the beach.

³¹ Guatemozin or Quauhtemotzin attempted to escape from his besieged capital by Lake Tezcuco, but was caught upon it and after an interval hung at the age of 80 by his cruel captors on a false charge of treachery. What made his execution all the more shameful, leaving not even the plea of religious bigotry for its excuse, he died a good Christian.

³² On attempting a sortie from the hill fortress of Edessa.

³³ Saladin did not personally take part in Nooredin's enterprises until many years later, but his father and uncle were in Nooredin's service.

Tyrol's artery, arrowy Inn,
With wet belt thrice girt Custrin ³⁴
Donau, Theiss, doomed Szegedin
(Pomp! take there thy medicine) ³⁵
Sweltering lakes of Debreczin, ³⁶
China's wall, Yang-Tze, Tientsin
120 Where from throne or palanquin
Taoutai, high Mandarin ³⁷
Hurls his threats, inhuman Lin,
Ruins piled of Elephantine,
Malabar's coast where seas drove in

³⁴ There is a triple line of wet ditches round the fortress of Custrin in East Prussia occupied by the French from 1808 to 1814.

³⁵ Take physic, Pomp
Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel
That thou mayst share thy superflux with them,
And show the heavens more just.— *Lear*.

³⁶ The principal article of commerce of Debreczin is the Natron which is collected in summer from the beds of the dried up lakes in its vicinity.

³⁷ The Taoutai, as far as I can make out, is the Governor or Captain-General of a province or satrapy in China.

Burst o'er rock-girt Comorin,³⁸
 Scorching sands of Constantin,
 Tents of prowling Bedouin
 Sullen Boers' Wonderfontein³⁹

Watchful Echo waits for Winn

180 Or when crossed the frozen line
 Wandering lone by loch and linn
 Fjord where solemn broods Penguin,⁴⁰
 Haunt of Rein-deer Lapp and Finn
 Spearmen, hunters lacustrine

³⁸ "Cape Comorin is the southern extremity of Hindoostan. Within two or three cable's lengths of the south-east part of the point lies a high rocky islet with other rocks about it, on which the sea breaks." Elephantine "is covered with heaps of ruins piled on each other, Egyptian, Roman, Saracenic and Arabian."

³⁹ The boers in the Transvaal had recently been holding a council at Wonderfontein to decide on their course of action towards Cetewayo and the British Government.

⁴⁰ The Penguins are fat stupid birds found on the banks of streams in high latitudes, so inert or rapt in contemplation of the beatific vision, that they will stand stock still and allow boatmen to knock them over with their oars in passing rather than take the trouble of getting out of their way.

Or that trap for Wolverine
Sable, White-Fox, Ermelin—
For rigged bark, canoe of skin
Samoiede yourt, their daintiest inn—
Furs, tusks, ore from land of Tchín⁴¹
140 Where necks crouch to Potemkin
Mentchikoff and Apraxin⁴²
(Gall to free-souled Golovin)
Near the cold north-star I'd win :
Echo shrills out

Star-eyed Winn !

⁴¹ Tchín is the Russian name (of Chinese origin) for the hierarchy that extends from the lowest parish constable to the foot of the throne. It includes Army, Navy, Ecclesiastical, Civil and Government functionaries as links in one single continuous chain in which every man has his distinct place and number and it is said, his price.

⁴² Mentchikoff and Potemkin every child in arms (as the late Lord Macaulay would say) is familiar with. Apraxin, the earliest of the name, founded the Russian Navy under Peter the Great. Golovin, once in the Russian foreign office, subsequently retired to England and there issued pamphlets showing up the impolicy of the ruthless system of government pursued by his former master Nicolas, fit precursor of the panic-stricken "Godlike form from the North."

Where the giddy waltzers spin
And to Hamerik's violin ⁴³
Hautboy, flute, and clavecin,
Under hem of crinolin
Tulle or 'broidered Valenciennes
150 Pretty feet peep out and in
As mice peer through wainscotin', ⁴⁴
Or remote from glare and din,
Curacoa and Maraschin'

⁴³ Mr. Asger Hamerik is the distinguished professor at the Academy of Music and conductor at the Peabody Concerts, the Sir Julius Benedict or Theodore Thomas of Baltimore. For the benefit of my English friends I may add that Cincinnati has recently won away Theodore Thomas from New York at a secured salary of \$10,000 per annum (with liberty to teach and give concerts) to conduct the musical performances at their magnificent Music Hall. The antient Porkopolis may now be regarded as the Art Centre of the Union.

⁴⁴ I have seen mice run in and out, in the most cheeky fashion, under the skirting board near the hot water pipes this winter in the dining room at Rennert's Hotel. The main image is of course borrowed from Sir John Suckling. For justification of the form of the final syllable of the line see "The Courtin'" by the accomplished United States Minister at the Court of St. James, *passim*.

Flood the hissing Terrapin,⁴⁵
Tableaux vivants classic Gwinn⁴⁶
Sets from Froissart and Rapin
Where with mild sway rules McKim,⁴⁷
Weeps forlorn Maid of Moulins
Maria innocent Magdalen,
160 Or arch slyboots shuffles in
Childlike almond-eyed Ah-Sin,⁴⁸

⁴⁵ The proper way of serving Terrapin is on a chafing-dish over a spirit-lamp. It has an earthy flavor which in my opinion a mixture of fiery ingredients is required to correct, but the Baltimoreans in general prefer some mild unaccentuated sauce to their favorite reptile. A controversy has for some time past been raging between the press of Baltimore and of New York as to which city is entitled to lay down the law on the proper mode of cooking Terrapin.

⁴⁶ The name of the leading lady Greek scholar in Baltimore, now pursuing her studies in Europe, but who is in no way connected with these vain shows. Happily it contains a band of lady Hellenists.

⁴⁷ Mr. McKim is the deservedly popular chairman of the Theatrical Committee of the Baltimore Wednesday Club, a highly successful and useful association for the promotion of literature, music, art and the drama.

⁴⁸ "And he smiled as he sat at the table

With a smile that was childlike and bland."

The Heathen Chinese.

While on cord with leer and grin
 In war-paint and moccasin
 Buffalo-robed Assiniboin,⁴⁹
 Baron bold of Bradwardin
 Piper pied of Hamelin,
 Or tricked out like Trissotin,
 Points the toe and poises shin
 Drones on pipe or bangs sheepskin
 170 Emulous of thy feats Blondin!
 Somersault-throwing Mannikin,
 Or where round the green cloth's rim
 Some lose madly and some win:
Echo mimicks

Win-some Winn.

Whether lit by pale stars dim,
 Will-o'-the-wisp or hobgoblin
 Or when Pimlico's sports begin⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Name of the *wandering* branch of the Sioux.

⁵⁰ Pimlico is the name of the race course ground, near Baltimore, where races are held twice a year. Hopkins means Johns Hopkins University. I have never fallen in

(Hopkins' unforbidden sin,
 Mess of favored Benjamin
 180 That share not to their chagrin
 Harvard, Yale or Bowdoin)⁵¹
*As past winning post the twain*⁵²
With fleet hoof and flying mane,
Polycuote and Pelerin
 (Fair Meade this, that Markgräfin
 To Boreas and Bellarmin
 Foaled on grassy Wisconsin)⁵³

with any of our students at the races. The Pimlico spring meeting opens the racing season for all America on this side of the Rocky Mountains. I was there in 1877 when East and West (New York State and Kentucky) met in the saddle to contend for the Primacy of the Turf. I witnessed Ten-Broek succumb and Parole hanel his laurels.

⁵¹ The sound of Bowdoin in New Hampshire, the most northern of American Colleges, has become corrupted in common usage in this country to Bowdon. So Gascoigne has dwindled into Gaskin. I, of course, intend the proper pronunciation as a trisyllable to be maintained.

⁵² The *italics* are used (here as in other places) to warn the reader or declaimer of the poem that the plane of his voice is to be thrown back.

⁵³ Wisconsin (largely colonized by Germans) consists almost exclusively of rolling prairie. By the use of the preposition *on* instead of *in* it is intended to convey the

Neck and neck with level chin,
Midst mad rour and-deafening din
 190 *Like tide lashed by storm rush in,*
 Home my way through thick and thin
 Of that Vanity-Fair I win,
Echo whips out
 Fair-y Winn.

To whom votive rhymes I'd spin
 Such as wove by Taliesin,⁵⁴

idea of it being one vast Middlepark or grass farm on which Polyeucte and Pelerin have been foaled. The name is usually pronounced Wiscónsin, but the accentuation in names of places of Indian origin seems to be somewhat uncertain. Thus the Whites throw the accent on the middle, the Aborigines with a finer ear for rhythm, on the first syllable of Iowa. There was a famous race-horse, whose name I cannot recall, who was trained to keep his head down until the instant before reaching the winning post and then suddenly darting it forward into a *level* position, win the race literally *by a nose*.

⁵⁴ Taliesin (520-570) counts as one of the three principal Christian Welsh Bards. *Ein frommer Knecht war Fridolin*. Oberlin is the devoted Protestant pastor and home missionary of that name who civilized the "ban de la Roche," a

Set to lute or mandolin
Meek ~~and blameless~~ ^{unrepentant} Fridolin
(Mock to mad-cap Cherubin')
Holy calm to shed within,
200 Not chaste neck to incarnadine,
Peri like or Oberlin
Wistful fay or sorrowing Jinn
Watched by pitying cherubim,
Till at Heaven's gate entering in
Paradise by prayer I win.
Echo sighs out

Air-y Winn.

ROBIN AND POET:

Die Echo! earth's ball cease to spin!
Still blooms *thy* wreath, rosemary, Winn!⁵⁵
Echo murmurs

Rose, Mary Winn.

district near the Vosges, (a truly good man.) Jinn is the name we are all familiar with under its corrupted form in the tales of the Genii.

⁵⁵ Rosemary, *ros marinum*, (undoubtedly useful *teste inexpertis* for preserving the hair) is said to be the emblem of

210 *Dies on the rose in aromatic pain*⁵⁶

Or in deep swounds-as there to nestle fain
*Sucks in sweet breath and Wins to life again.*⁵⁷

De ces fins gestes voilà la fin !⁵⁸

"fidelity and constancy." It twice occurs along with *rue* in Shakespeare, associated with *remembrance*. The old-fashioned farmers in Virginia put rosemary into their lard before boiling in order to make it keep sweet. It is also cultivated to some but a less extent in the country districts of Maryland. The boar's head (sacred to the Sun) decked with wreaths of bays and rosemary is a relic of druidical worship commemorated by Karl Blind in a recent number of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, who in describing the Christmas festivities at Oxford quotes the old song :

The boar's head in hand bear I
 Bedecked with bays and rosemary.

⁵⁶ Or quick effluvia darting through the brain
 Dies of a rose in aromatic pain.

Essay on Man, I.

⁵⁷ Without your aid I would not have won near her.

Walter Scott.

⁵⁸ In the poem (or perhaps I ought to say *recueil choisi* of nonsense verses) there are some words rhyming to *een*, (the subdominant key in which the composition opens before it feels its way to and finally settles on the tonic in

in,) and a few other rhymes distributed between the intermediate or neighboring keys of *ain*, *ine*, *en* and *im*. Following the example of Shakespeare I design French names to be pronounced according to the rules of English spelling. I have read through the *Allegro*, *Penseroso* and *Lycidas*, the *Deserted Village* and the *Traveller*, the *Rape of the Lock* and the *Essays on Man* and on *Criticism*, without discovering a single termination that rhymes to *in*.

With the exception of the three concluding lines the meter throughout is meant to be pure trochaic and not mixed iambic and trochaic as in the inimitable *Allegro* and *Penseroso*. The few deviations which occur are more apparent than real, but to justify this assertion would involve the necessity of stating in detail my view of English Rhythm as containing two distinct schemes or strands of time and accent in general coincident, but occasionally and subject to certain laws of resolution and substitution, free to open out into loops and waves or to shift lengthways, so as to render sensible the fact of their independent although usually blended existence.

Time in the identical sense in which it is used in music is, or ought to be, every bit as controlling a factor in Teutonic rhymes as in Greek choral meters. My rhythm at all events is addressed to the ear and not to the fingers. In Milton we have occasional instances of unscannable lines in which (in anticipation of some of the most characteristic effects of the piano-forte music of the last quarter of a century) the time of a whole verse forms, as it were, one entire and perfect monolith, an unarticulated sequence, (a sort of, so to say, time-chromatic scale.) Such lines are the finest of all, but are only to be introduced very sparingly and not to

be attempted except by those gifted like Milton with an exceptionally delicate and cultivated musical ear.

The words at the foot of the title page it is hoped may serve to embalm and transmit to posterity a *bon mot* launched at a recent public lunch intended to bring together the *alumni* of American and European Universities resident in Baltimore, who mustered several hundred strong on the occasion. The author of this effusion having been called upon to acknowledge a toast to the Universities of the Old World, excused himself for being unprepared with a set speech, on the ground that he had been busy all the morning, and on the previous evening when about to arrange the order of his ideas to meet the emergency, had received an invitation (too agreeable to decline) to join some ladies in their box at the Opera (Mapleson with Gerster and the full strength of the Italian company was then over in America), to which Mr. Teackle Wallis responded from the chair that he accepted with pleasure the explanation of his honorable friend who had just sat down and hoped that he would always continue to act in accordance with the maxim

OPERA NON VERBA.

JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY;
BALTIMORE, MD., U. S.,
January, 1880.

POSTSCRIPT

On the various readings and true interpretation of the passage :

Eburnâ, dic age, cum Lyra
Maturet, in comptum Lacænæ
More comas religata nodum !

I am indebted for the reference to this passage to my gifted friend and colleague, Prof. Gildersleeve, who gallantly came to my rescue with it, to ward off a sudden flank attack made at a friendly after-dinner recital, upon those lines of the poem, in which a "back-hair pin" is referred to; the assailing party protesting that he saw nothing in the idea of a lady's back-hair to fall off into raptures about. On turning to Müller's pocket edition of Horace I found "in comptum comas nodum" turned into "incomptam comam nodo," and on further consulting Keller's *Epilipomena*, Leipzig, 1879, I discovered that *incomptum* and *incomptam* with the *in* prepositive and compositive, *comam*, *coma*, *comas*, *nodum* and *nodo*, *religata* and *religare* too, as I understand from Prof. Morris, are found in different manuscripts or arbitrarily foisted upon them by would-be reformers of the text.

I have no hesitation in accepting the passage as it fell from the lips of Prof. Gildersleeve.

Macleane adopts it, but with his usual cool assurance and almost incredible fatuity renders *in comptum nodum* as meaning "into a simple knot," thus cutting the Gordian (or Laconian) knot by reduplicating the *in* and taking it as at once prepositive and compositive, making in fact *comptum* = *incomptum*.

Keller approves* of Bentley's wild conjecture 1st, that the scribe, writing from dictation, set down *nodōm* for *nodo*, and 2d, that as it was felt (!) that *nodum* needed an *in* to govern it, *incomptam* was changed into *in comptum*.

He objects to the reading *in comptum nodum* that *comptus* cannot mean *simpliciter pexus* but must

*It is more inexcusable in Keller to approve than for Bentley to have proposed this needless violation of the text, inasmuch as the etymology of "*comere*," parallel to that of *adimere*, *eximere*, etc., had probably not been suggested in Bentley's time. Bentley may be regarded as the very opposite to our Abernethy, the founder of the school of conservative surgery. He reminds me of the late eminent London dentist, Dr. Samuel Cartwright, who on one occasion when I sat to him for another purpose, out of mere *gaité de cœur* and delight in handling his tools, before I had time to protest, wrenched an innocent milk-white wisdom tooth (the pet lamb of the flock) out of its socket, on the ground that it was not wanted and was doing no good where it was. If it did no good it was doing no harm and at least served to fill out the cheek.

bear the sense of *adorned*, which is incompatible with the sense of the passage. I am prepared to show, with all possible deference to the mighty shade of Dr. Bentley that this ground of objection is utterly untenable and proceeds from a mistaken view of the construction of the sentence. *Comptum*, from *co* and *emere*, is used not as a participial *adjective*, but as a *participle* proper, and *more* stands in immediate connexion not with *nodum*, but with *comptum* so that the stress of the sentence, the high light of the picture, (greatly to its embellishment,) falls not upon *nodum*, but upon the elegant distinctive trisyllable *Lacænæ*.

The *nodus* is to be *comptus* not "in gradus atque anulos," but *Lacænæ more* Spartan fashion, simply wound round itself and made secure with a fillet or a pin or dagger of some sort thrust through it. I append a literal construction of the much disputed lines: "Let her come quick, tied-back her hair (or having tied back her hair*) into a knot (or bunch) put together (done up) in Laconian-girl fashion!"

As I write, Memory, turning her inextinguishable lamp upon the past, reveals to me the slight erect

* According to the highly philosophical theory, accepted by the most thoughtful philologists, as Key, Gildersleeve, etc., of the reflective use of the passive form.

figure of a young girl, in a plain black dress, in the interim between the morning's ride and the afternoon drive, entering the room where I sat waiting to see her mother—her beautiful hazel-colored backhair, usually disposed in tresses down her neck, gathered into a knot, (*in nodum comas religata*,) not puffed out or made important with adventitious aids, but put together (*comptum Lacænæ more*) in a simple and natural coil. Her mother, who was too unwell to appear, had doubtless sent down word *dic age maturet* "tell her to make haste!"

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